

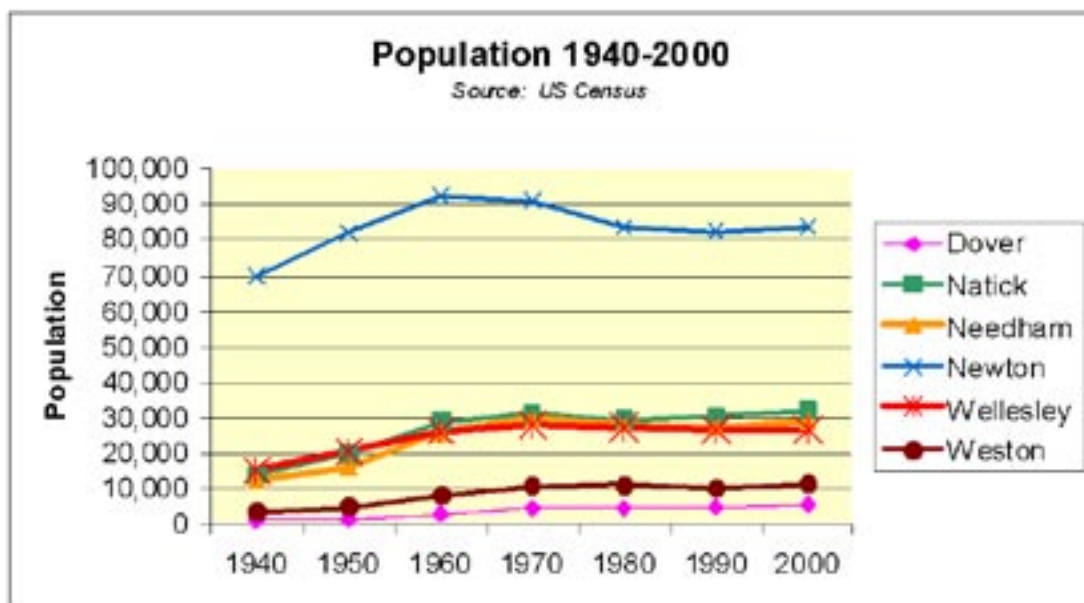
3 Population and Land Use Trends

Wellesley is a stable community that is barely growing. The challenges that the Town faces are not the result of population growth in itself. However, there may be changes in the demographic composition of this generally stable population, such as increases or decreases in the number of school children or elderly persons, that the Town should consider in planning for the future.

Similarly, the fundamental land use decisions about Wellesley were made many decades ago and are not likely to change. It will remain predominantly residential and most of the land will be occupied by single-family homes. Of course, construction continues in various forms, as it does in almost all communities, and residents are often very sensitive to the change that a relatively small amount of construction activity can bring to an established neighborhood.

A. POPULATION

Like many suburban towns, Wellesley grew rapidly during the period after World War II. The Town's population increased by 85 percent between 1940 and 1970. From its peak population in 1970 of 28,051, the Town's population has declined by 5 percent but seems to be stabilizing around 25,000. During the 1990s the Town experienced a net loss of two persons from 26,615 to 26,613. This population trend is not unusual and can also be seen in Wellesley's neighboring towns. At the time of the census, approximately forty percent of Wellesley residents had moved to Town within the last five years. The overall stability of the total population number, therefore, does not mean that people are not moving in and out of Wellesley all the time.



POPULATION—WHO ARE WE?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Wellesley's population has stabilized between 26,000 and 27,000 since 1980.

- Population decreased 5 percent from 1970 (28,051) to 2000 (26,613).
- While Wellesley's population decreased by two persons from 1990 to 2000, Norfolk County's grew by 5.5 percent.

Compared to the population of Norfolk County, Wellesley

- has a larger proportion of residents under 19 years old
- has a slightly smaller proportion of residents 65 and over
- has a smaller proportion of residents between 20 and 34 years old
- has a smaller proportion of non-family and single-person households
- has a slightly younger median age
- has a median household income that is nearly double that of the county.

Total Population (2000): 26,613 (vs. 26,615 in 1990)

Age Composition

- 25.1 percent under 18 years old
- 15.2 percent 20-34 years old
- 30.6 percent 35-54 years old
- 14 percent 65 years and over

Total Number of Households (2000): 8,594 households (vs. 8,472 in 1990)

- 76.1 percent family households (persons related by blood or marriage)
- 39.2 percent of total are families with own children under 18
- 23.9 percent of total are non-family households
- 20.7 percent of total are single-person households
- 40.5 percent of households include people under 18 years old
- 28.3 percent of households include people 65 years and over
- 12.9 percent of the population does not live in households but in group quarters such as educational institutions
- Increase of 122 households from 1990 to 2000 despite no population growth

Racial/Ethnic Composition (race alone or in combination)

- 90 percent white
- 1.6 percent African-American
- 6.4 percent Asian
- 1.4 percent two or more races
- 2.3 percent Hispanic/Latino (of any race)

Language Spoken at Home

- 14.2 percent speak a language other than English
- 3.4 percent speak English less than "very well"

Disability

- 4.6 percent of people 5-20 years old
- 6.4 percent of people 21-64 years old
- 21.8 percent of people 65 years and over

Income (1999)

- \$113,686 median household income
- \$134,769 median family income
- 66 percent of households have incomes of more than \$100,000
- 7 percent of households have incomes below \$35,000
- 2.4 percent of families have incomes below the poverty level

- 3.8 percent of the individuals are in households with incomes below the poverty level

Educational Attainment

- 75.7 percent of the population over 25 years old has a bachelor's or advanced degree

Public School Population

- 87.3 percent white; 6.3 percent Asian; 3.9 percent African-American; 2.2 percent Hispanic
- 3.2 percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
- 1.2 percent with limited English proficiency; 14.2 percent enrolled in special education classes

Note: Students living in dormitories are not counted as households.

Sources: US Census 2000; Warren Group; MAPC

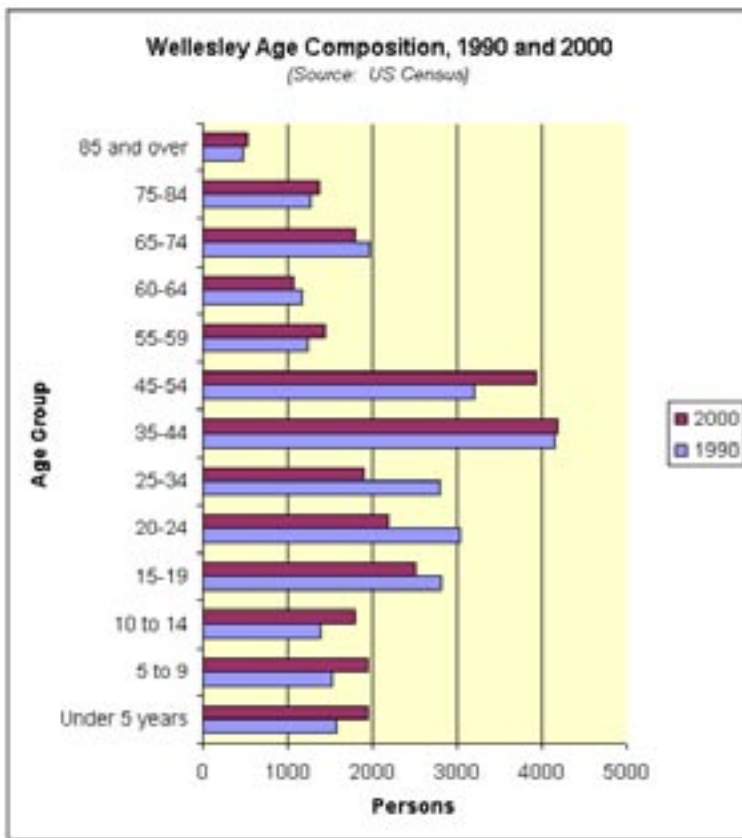
Household and Age Composition

Although Wellesley's total population declined slightly over the course of the 1990s, the number of households increased by 122, or 1 percent, to a total of 8,594. This reflects the long-term national trend towards fewer people in each household. In 2000, 76 percent of the households were family households (related by blood or marriage, but not necessarily with children) and 21 percent were single-person households. The remainder lived in households with nonrelatives or in group quarters such as college dormitories. (Almost 13 percent of the Town's population in 2000 was in group quarters, reflecting the presence of residential schools and colleges.) The average number of people per household was 2.7, while the average size of family households was 3.1.

Although Wellesley continues to be a predominantly family-oriented town, it also has significant numbers of empty-nesters and elderly persons. Households including children under

18 accounted for 41 percent of all households and 89 percent of these households have two parents present (the statewide figure is 76 percent). Twenty-eight percent of households included someone 65 or older—a larger percentage than Norfolk County, the MetroWest Region, or the state as a whole. Wellesley's median age in 2000 was 37.6, slightly younger than that of Norfolk County (38.1).

An examination of the town's age composition in 1990 and 2000 suggests several trends. The age data show the expected shift upwards of the large baby-boom generation. However, they have brought with them the baby boom "echo" which shows up in greater numbers of children to age 14. During the 1990s, the under-five population grew 25 percent and the age 5 to 9 populations grew 27 percent. The number of households with members age 65 and over dropped by one percent but the number of families with children under the age of 18 increased by more than 20 percent. The



smaller number of persons in the older age categories suggests that Wellesley seniors are leaving town. The Town has a much smaller population of 20-34 year olds than the state as a whole, and it has experienced a greater decline in this group since 1990, perhaps reflecting the very high cost of housing in Wellesley.

Racial Composition

Over the course of the 1990s, Wellesley's population became slightly more diverse. From a 94-percent white population in 1990, the town in 2000 had a white population of 90 percent. The difference is primarily due to an increase in the Asian population from 3.9 percent of the total in 1990 to 6.4 percent in 2000. Black or African-American residents represented 1.6 percent in 2000, up slightly from 1.5 percent in 1990.

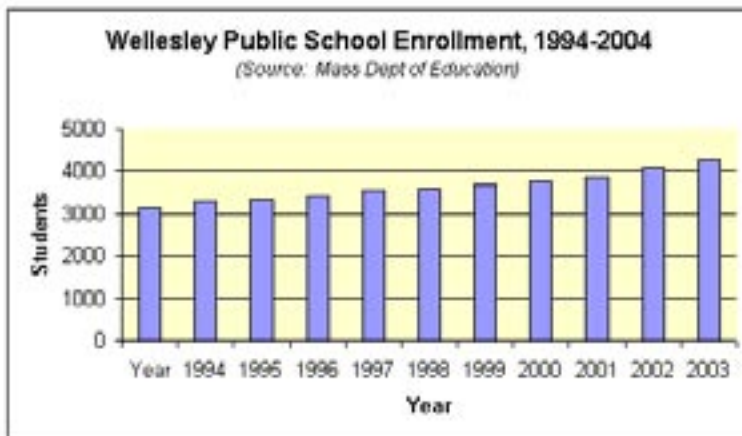
School Population

Wellesley's public elementary and high-school enrollment totals 4,252 for the school year 2003-2004. Approximately 85 percent of the school-aged children attend the public schools. Since the 1994 enrollment of 3,141, public school enrollment has been increasing approximately 3.5 percent annually. In the 2003-2004 academic year, 3.2 percent of the students were from low-income households.

Income Profile

Wellesley's median household income of \$113,686, as reported in the 2000 census, is 79 percent higher than Norfolk County's median of \$63,432 and 125 percent higher than the statewide median of \$50,502. The Town's median family income of \$134,769 is the fifth highest in the state.

Nearly two-thirds of Wellesley's households have incomes of \$100,000 or more. Median family income was even higher at \$134,769.



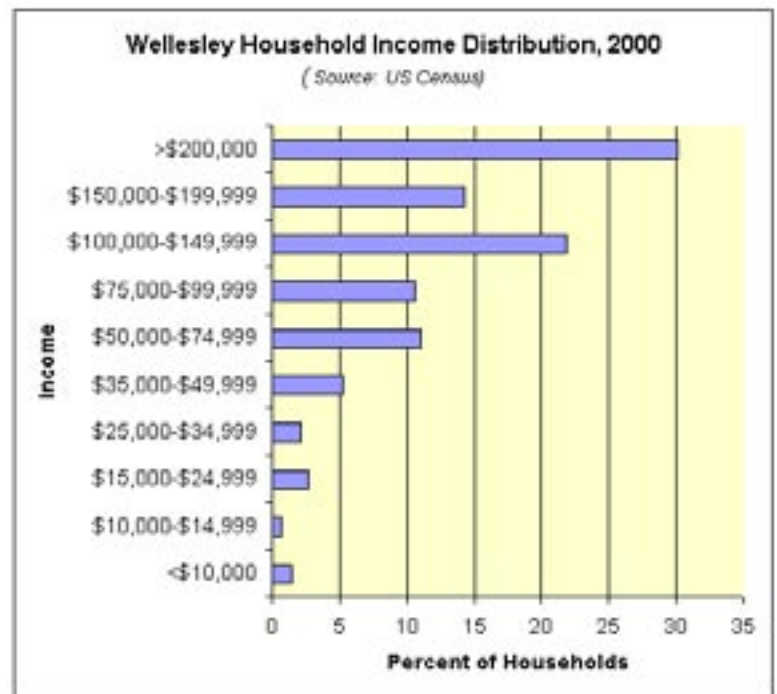
At the same time, 12 percent of the Town's households have incomes under \$50,000. The number of families below the poverty level total 158, or 2.4 percent, compared to 2.9 percent for Norfolk County and 6.4 percent for Massachusetts. The number of individuals in households with incomes below the poverty level total 3.7 percent, compared to 4.6 percent for Norfolk County and 9.3 percent for Massachusetts.

Population Projections

Projections of future population by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Massachusetts Institute of Economic and Social Research (MISER), differ significantly. According to MAPC, Wellesley will experience a 2 percent decline between 2000 and 2005, followed by an average annual growth of .6 percent per year over the following 20 years, for a population of 29,466 by 2025. MAPC projects a 10.7 percent increase in population between the 2000 base year and 2025. Most of that increase is expected between 2010 and 2020. The reason for a nearly 9 percent increase between 2010 and 2020 is not self-evident. In stark contrast, the MISER projection for Wellesley up to 2020 foresees a continuing trend of population decline. Perhaps the lesson of these differing projections is that relatively small changes in small populations in nearly built-out communities are very difficult to predict.

2000 COMPARATIVE INCOME DISTRIBUTION: WELLESLEY, NORFOLK COUNTY, AND MASSACHUSETTS

INCOME CATEGORIES	WELLESLEY % OF HOUSEHOLDS	COUNTY % OF HOUSEHOLDS	STATE % OF HOUSEHOLDS
<\$10,000	1.4	5.6	8.8
\$10,000-\$14,999	.7	3.9	5.6
\$15,000-\$24,999	2.7	7.6	10.2
\$25,000-\$34,999	2.1	8.5	10.4
\$35,000-\$49,999	5.2	12.8	14.5
\$50,000-\$74,999	11.0	20.1	20.1
\$75,000-\$99,999	10.6	15.1	12.8
\$100,000-\$149,999	21.8	15.0	10.9
\$150,000-\$199,999	14.3	5.3	3.3
>\$200,000	30.1	6.1	3.5



POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR WELLESLEY

	2000*	2010	2020	2025
MAPC Projection	26,613	26,707	29,094	29,466
MISER Projection	26,613	26,002	24,291	N/A

Source: US Census 2000

MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Commission

MISER = Massachusetts Institute of Economic and Social Research

B. EXISTING LAND USE

Over half of Wellesley's land is used for residential purposes. Another 36 percent is in various tax-exempt land use categories, including churches, nonprofits, schools and colleges, and government-owned property. Commercial and

LAND USE DISTRIBUTION, 2004

	ACRES
Residential Buildings	3152.27
• developable or potentially developable residential land	182.55
• undevelopable residential land	92.79
Commercial/industrial with buildings	245.61
• developable or potentially developable comm./indust. land	0.75
• undevelopable comm./indust. land	0.21
Tax-exempt land	2043.56
TOTAL	5717.74

industrial land uses occupy less than 5 percent of the land. A few mixed-use properties are included in these categories, but they represent the fundamental distribution of land uses in Wellesley. Land use is not the same thing as zoning and, like all communities, Wellesley has

some properties

whose uses do not conform to zoning. For the most part, however, the overall distribution of land uses throughout the town is not likely to change significantly. Significant new development in Wellesley could occur in specific places, but the likelihood of such change is relatively remote, with few exceptions:

- **Educational land uses.** If the colleges or Dana Hall were ever to sell off large areas of land, they would have to be rezoned for noneducational uses before a private owner could develop them. As a state-owned property, Mass Bay Community College is probably the most likely to be considered for land sales.
- **Wellesley Country Club.** Unlike the educational institutions, the country club is zoned for residential use. While there is no reason to believe that most of the land will not continue as a golf course and country club, it is

never impossible for a club to have financial difficulties. The Town may wish to put some precautionary measures in place in the event of a change in uses. The country club property currently receives a tax abatement as recreational open space under state law Chapter 61B.

- **Mixed Uses.** Another kind of land use change is much more likely to occur. This is the intensification of mixed uses in the commercial districts of Wellesley. Although there are some mixed-use buildings in Wellesley today, many of the community's goals for change focus attention on promoting residential uses along with retail and services in Wellesley's commercial districts.

Zoning

Wellesley has a somewhat complex zoning system that reflects its relatively built-out character.

(See Figure 3-1, Zoning Map and Figure 3-2, Existing Land Use.)

Six single-family residential districts account for most of the land area and are differentiated by minimum lot sizes ranging from 10,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet. There are five residential districts that allow town house or multifamily residential use, but, with the exception of the General Residence (GR) district, which allows for two-family and town house buildings, and the Limited Residence district, all the multifamily districts are quite small and give the impression that they were intended to accommodate a few specific and known projects. Four zoning districts allow commercial development (including offices) and two allow industrial uses. Three educational districts include lands owned by Wellesley College, Dana Hall School, Babson College, and Mass Bay Community College. These districts differ in that Educational A requires off-street parking lots in addition to the residential, academic, and dormitory build-

LAND AREA IN ZONING DISTRICTS

ZONES	ACRES
Administrative and Professional	62.07
Business	58.01
Business A	48.99
Conservation	389.74
Educational	549.13
Educational A	44.08
Educational B	27.15
General Residence	78.66
Industrial	21
Industrial A	17.95
Limited Apartment	7.23
Limited Business	10.81
Limited Residential	8.37
Lower Falls Village Commercial District	8.93
Multi-Family	6.05
Single Residence District 10	1551.54
Single Residence District 15	654.32
Single Residence District 20	1517.89
Single Residence District 30	228.32
Single Residence District 40	661.29
Single Residence A	6.01
Town House	4.12
Transportation	58.72
Total	6020.38

Source: Wellesley Planning Department

ings allowed in the Educational District and Educational B allows private, for-profit recreational facilities in addition to the uses allowed in the other educational districts.

Commercial districts include an office park zoning district, which was designed for the office parks on Route 128, and six business districts, including one focused on Lower Falls and one on Wellesley Square.

Industrial districts are located at Linden Street, in the rear parcels behind the Lower Falls frontage on Washington Street, and in the rear parcels behind Walnut Street frontage north of Cedar Street. Despite the “industrial” zoning, the land uses on these parcels are office or commercial. Finally, a Transportation District covers the commuter rail right of way and train platforms.

Several districts protect sensitive resources in Wellesley: Flood Plain and Watershed Protection District; Conservation District; Historic District; and Water Supply Protection District. These districts constrain uses in order to protect specific environmental or cultural resources. In addition, the Residential Incentive Overlay District was intended to promote residential use on the Grossman’s site and adjacent parcels on the Charles River.

Site plan approval is required for projects that meet certain size thresholds, excluding single-family and two-family homes. Major Construction Projects include new construction of over 2,500 square feet gross floor area or an increase by 50 percent or more to result in a gross floor area of at least 2,500 square feet; grading or vegetation removal over 5,000 square feet or more; and activities in flood plain or watershed protection and water supply protection districts. These projects go to Town boards for review, including the Design Review Board. Minor Construction Projects are below the size of Major Projects but involve exterior changes requiring a building permit and/or changes to parking. Minor Projects require only Design Review. A Project of Significant Impact (PSI) is one with at least 10,000 square feet of new construction or, if there is 15,000 square feet or more altered, renovated or replacement floor area for a change of use in a building of at least 15,000 square feet. Projects of Significant Impact require a Special Use Permit, Site Plan Review, and Design Review.

The Zoning Board of Appeals is the Special Permit Granting Authority in Wellesley. Design Review is required for all façade renovations, new construction, and new signs, with the exception of single- and two-family houses.

Development Trends

Single-family residential development in Wellesley is limited to very rare small subdivisions when an estate or institutional property is sold, infill on a few buildable vacant lots, and tear-down and replacement construction, which is by far the most common. Commercial development is also not very common, but there are redevelopment opportunities in a number of the town's commercial districts, particularly those areas that have been built to a more suburban,

car-oriented character. The current development project for the Linden Street commercial district is an example of new development that the Town actively planned for in its 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

In this Comprehensive Plan, the land use issues reflect the development trends. Tear-downs and replacement houses, how to provide more variety of housing types without adversely affecting the character of single-family neighborhoods, how to provide more affordable housing, and how to make the car-oriented commercial districts more appealing and attractive for redevelopment will be discussed in detail in the chapters that follow.